

# Who We Are:

## FASD Justice Working Group

### Our Mission...

Demonstrate leadership by building FASD knowledge and support systems through education, training, and promoting community awareness in the Justice Sector.

Work closely with the Halton FASD Collaborative Working groups to ensure Justice Sector needs for assessment/diagnosis and intervention programs are met.

### Our Principles...

- Our work will be directed by the unique needs of children, youth, adults affected by FASD and their families/support networks in Halton Region
- Promoting a culture that enables leadership, responsibility and innovation in our work and with those whom we partner is critical to achieving our mission
- Our committee members are trained and experienced to achieve service excellence through collaboration and co-ordination for the best interests of our stakeholders
- Public awareness is fundamental to building an enlightened and non-judgmental community

# History

The Halton FASD Collaborative consists of dedicated professionals and parents who represent 31 Halton-based service agencies. We are supported by a three-year grant by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The Collaborative has an active Steering Committee and five working groups focusing on Prevention, Intervention, Diagnosis and Assessment, Justice and Parent Support/Advocacy.

The mission is to develop programs and services to meet the unique needs of children, youth and adults (birth to age 24) and their families affected by FASD in Halton Region.

# Resources

FASD Hamilton  
[www.fasdhamilton.ca](http://www.fasdhamilton.ca)

FASD Ontario  
[www.fasdontario.ca](http://www.fasdontario.ca)

FASD Waterloo  
[www.fasdwaterlooregion.ca](http://www.fasdwaterlooregion.ca)

Halton FASD Parent/Caregiver Support Group  
Mary Bunkowsky  
[mbunkowsky@cogeco.ca](mailto:mbunkowsky@cogeco.ca)

FASD and Justice  
[www.fasdjustice.ca](http://www.fasdjustice.ca)

References:  
Public Health Agency of Canada  
FASD and the Justice System  
FASD Support Network of Saskatchewan - Law-Enforcement & FASD  
University of Ottawa - Facts and Figures about Abortion  
Asante Centre  
[Fasworld-what-is-fasd](http://Fasworld-what-is-fasd)

Date Revised - March 2015

# Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

## AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

What you need to know as:  
Parents, Guardians, Caregivers  
and Supports

Halton  
**FASD**  
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder



# FASD & Justice

FASD is an umbrella term describing a range of disabilities that may affect people whose mothers consumed alcohol while pregnant. While there are different diagnoses included in the FASD spectrum, all individuals with FASD have brain damage. This brain damage can cause a range of disabilities including mild to severe delays in cognitive, physical, emotional, social and behavioural skills.

FASD ONE Towards a Provincial Strategy 2010

Possible diagnoses include:

## Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)

Physical indicators include: small size for their age, small eyes, smooth philtrum (space between nose and upper lip) and thin upper lip.

## Partial FAS (pFAS)

Physical indicators include some but not all of the physical signs of FAS.

## Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND)

80% of FASD diagnoses. There are no physical indicators.

## Alcohol Related Birth Defects (ARBD)

Can include: brain damage, vision/hearing difficulties, improper formation of limbs and organs and slow growth.

## Challenges may include...

- Functioning lower than actual age
- Language and communication issues
- Poor processing speed and/or reasoning
- Learning and memory challenges
- Problems with day to day functioning
- Fatigue and frustration
- Anxiety, anger, depression
- Poor self-esteem
- Isolation
- Difficulties in school and/or employment
- Inappropriate sexual behavior
- Alcohol and drug use
- May also be living with mental health challenges (often false ADD/ADHD diagnoses)
- Re-offending behaviours as they do not learn from punishment/consequences

## Reasons for involvement in the justice system may include...

- Numerous charges for same offence without escalation
- Can be easily manipulated as they are highly suggestible
- Will agree to leading questions and change story in response to negative feedback
- Poor judgment, problem solving, planning & reasoning

## Facts

FASD is more prevalent than Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, SIDS, Cystic Fibrosis and Spina Bifida combined

Approximate 1% of Canadians are living with FAS and approximately 5% are living with ARND

All persons with FASD have brain defects though physical indicators may not always be present

50% of pregnancies are unplanned. Most aren't normally detected for 4-6 weeks, during which time alcohol may have been consumed

No amount of alcohol during pregnancy is safe

## What Should You Do?

- Inform Duty Counsel or your lawyer if you or your loved one is diagnosed with or is suspected to have FASD
- Speak with Court Supports about available services within the courts and/or community
- Be open, FASD is not about judgment, rather appropriateness of services, interactions and understanding behaviours
- Think brain not blame